



# TIME-OUT

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CONSULTATION FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

*Time-out is one of the many discipline methods used today, but it is often over used. When used appropriately. Time-out can help children to think about their feelings, actions, to calm down and develop a better sense of self-control. However, if time-out is used inappropriately it can be ineffective and a humiliating experience for the child.*

*As a child care professional, you should use this technical assistance piece to help you review your discipline policy and how you use time-out in your daily program.*

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Time-out should only be used to stop aggressive behavior, for serious violations of the rules, and to allow angry or upset children to calm down. Use time-outs only as a last resort to help the child to calm down and gain a better sense of self-control.

### BEFORE USING TIME-OUT TRY THESE ALTERNATIVES:

- Give gentle reminders of the rules,
- Redirect the child to another activity.
- Give the child hugs and reassuring words when she is upset.
- Help the child to use his words to express and cope with his feelings.
- Ask the child to discuss his feelings and problems with you.
- Identify with the feelings that the child is expressing, but let him know that his behavior is unacceptable.
- Model the way you would like the child to behave.
- Ask the child to think about a better way to cope with a situation.
- Suggest different ways the child can cope with a situation.
- Listen to the child's point of view and try to help him to come up with a solution to his problem.
- Help the children to work out their differences.

**REMEMBER  
USE TIME-OUT ONLY AS A LAST RESORT!**

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### WHAT A TIME-OUT SHOULD BE

When used correctly time-out can be a positive learning experience in which the child has a chance to calm down, think about his feelings and actions, and learn how to better handle a similar situation in the future.

- An opportunity for the child and caregiver to calm down.

*Time-out is a calming device that allows both the child and caregiver to calm down and think about their feelings, actions, reactions, and solutions.*

- A place where children and caregivers go to feel better again.

*Time-out is a technique that gives children an opportunity to get away from an upsetting or discouraging situation, to calm down and feel better.*

- A time for the child to learn how to change disruptive or aggressive behaviors into constructive behaviors.

*Time-out gives children an opportunity to calm down and think about their actions, and come up with a solution for a better way to handle a similar situation in the future.*

- Available to a child for as little or as much time as he or she decides.

*Children should have control over when they are ready to leave the time-out area, because only the child knows when he or she feels better and is ready to talk about their actions.*

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## AVOID USING TIME-OUT FOR CHILDREN UNDER 3½ YEARS OF AGE

**Scenario:** A 3½ year old girl is working on putting together a popular puzzle at the day care. A 3-year-old boy wants to play with the same puzzle. Instead of asking if he can help her put the puzzle together, he shouts at the girl for playing with his favorite puzzle and pushes the puzzle off the table.

It is beyond most children under 3½ years of age understanding to share. They only understand that they want to play with a toy. For this reason, it is important to have more than one of a popular toy at your daycare prevent conflicts.

It is inappropriate to discipline children under 3½ years of age for behavior that is beyond their control and understanding. Young children need constant supervision. They should be kindly and firmly removed from what they cannot do and be redirected to an activity they can do. When you are preparing your day care home or center's environment, keep in mind that children below the age of 3½ do not understand the value of an object, such as a stereo system. Young children only know that they want to play with the object. If you do not want a too young child to play with an object keep it out of reach.

If children under 3½ years of age are upset and need time to calm down, an adult should go with the child to a quiet place and help them calm down. The adult can help the child calm down by doing a relaxing activity with him such as, hugging him, reading a book, listening to peaceful music, or sitting with him as he cuddles with a stuffed animal until he feels better.

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### REVIEW YOUR DISCIPLINE POLICY

Are you using time-out inappropriately? Consider revising your discipline policy if you answer yes to any of these questions below:

#### **Am I using time-out as a punishment?**

*Time-out should be used to help children learn how to gain control of his or her own behavior. It should not be used as a punishment.*

#### **Am I overusing time-out?**

*Use time-out sparingly. Always try positive alternative methods of discipline before you implement a time-out.*

#### **Am I using time-out as a retreat for me and not for the child?**

*When you use a time-out, use it because the child needs to calm down and regain a better sense of self-control not because you are angry.*

#### **Am I using time-out for every infraction of the rules?**

*If time-out is your only discipline tool, it is time to reevaluate your discipline policy to include positive methods of discipline.*

#### **Am I using time-out as a threat?**

*Time-out should never be used as a threat or punishment. Time-out should only be used to help a child to calm down and think about their feelings and actions.*

#### **Am I forgetting to discuss the reason for the time-out with the children?**

*Adults should always discuss with a child why he or she has been disciplined and help the child learn how he or she can better handle 01 similar situation in the future.*

#### **Am I trying alternatives before I use a time-out?**

*Use time-out only as a last resort! Always try alternatives to time-out first, for example redirection.*

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## HOW TO IMPLEMENT A TIME-OUT

**Let** the child know why he or she is being directed to time-out.

**Ask** or direct the child to go to an area that is away from the other children.

**Explain** to the child that this time is to be used to calm down and think.

**Tell** the child that after he or she has calmed down to call you over when he or she is ready to talk.

**Ask** the child to tell you what a better way of handling the situation would be.

**If** the child has trouble coming up with a solution, help by asking questions or by offering suggestions

**When** the child comes up with an appropriate solution, either by himself or with your help, let him rejoin play.